

ART COMPLEX MUSEUM

Complex conversations

By Debra Filcman
MPG Newspapers

The conversation officially begins anew this Sunday. The Art Complex Museum will host an opening reception for the latest exhibit in the Complex Conversations series.

The series, meant to promote conversation about and between the works of the two artists paired together in each installment, now features the art of Liz Haywood-Sullivan and Gail Boyajian. Their combined paintings already grace the gallery walls, waiting for the onslaught of viewers.

The pair are both landscape artists, though they work in different mediums, Haywood-Sullivan in pastels and Boyajian in oil.

"They are both absolutely splendid craftspeople, they both do landscapes and they use similar palettes," head curator Catherine Mayes said. "But then it gets really interest-

ing because that's where the similarities end."

Marshfield resident Haywood-Sullivan focuses on the quality of light in her landscapes, according to Mayes.

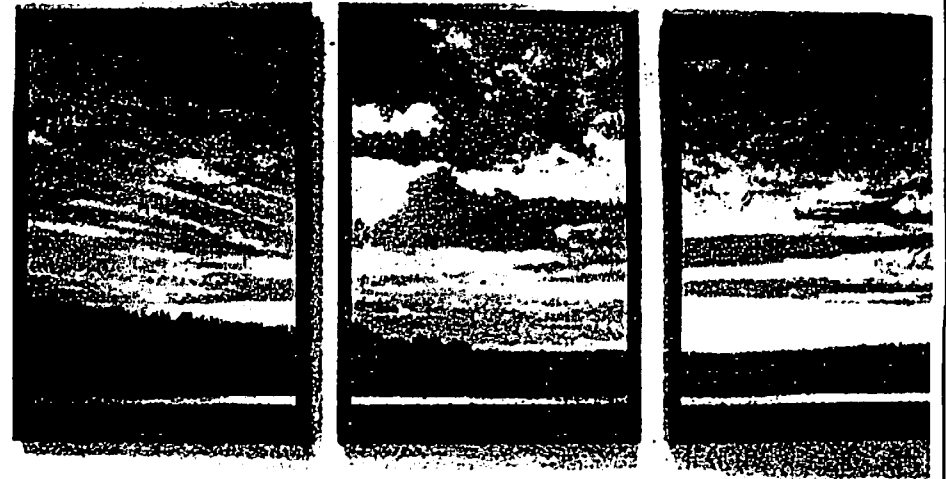
"They both do landscapes, but the landscape isn't really the subject for either of them," she said.

Although Haywood-Sullivan still hasn't met her fellow exhibitor, she said she's had complete trust in Mayes' decision to pair them.

"I look forward to meeting Gail at the reception but I don't think it would have changed the work we did if we had met sooner," Haywood-Sullivan said. "And I think this is actually a little closer to what they had in mind for Complex Conversations this way."

While Boyajian uses metaphor and historical context to inform her paintings, Haywood-Sullivan seeks to capture the essence

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Staff photo/Debra Filcman

Brilliant colors — "The North River: Sunset," by Liz Haywood-Sullivan, will be featured at the Art Complex Museum's latest installment of "Complex Conversations."

Landscape artists compared

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of the scene.

Sunsets are a primary focus for her landscape work, which she has focused solely on since 1996, when she and her husband closed their graphic design business.

She's also worked as an architectural renderer and exhibit designer. She teaches pastels at the North River Arts Society.

"For a long time, I felt that I was a jack of all trades but master of none," Haywood-Sullivan said. "I thought that if I could just focus on one thing... but for a long time I bough into the line that it's hard to make a living as an artist."

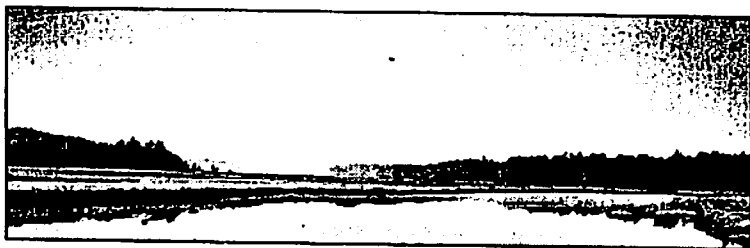
When finally afforded the opportunity to work on her paintings after the couple closed their business, she grabbed it.

"I've been working on it, seeing how far I can go with it, and I haven't hit a ceiling yet," Haywood-Sullivan said.

But, she said, you can't take the graphic or industrial designer out of her. The half-dozen paintings included in the Complex Conversations exhibit were created expressly for the museum, with the space in mind.

Many sizes and arrangements that work in a magazine won't work in a museum and vice versa, she said. With her background as an exhibit designer, she kept that idea in mind.

Her work is also derived from photographs. One of her paintings in particular, she said, was a compilation of more than 100 photographs of sunsets. The work, titled, "The North River: Sunset,"



Idyllic — Liz Haywood-Sullivan's "View from Cittenden" will be featured in "Complex Conversations."

was completely set up with photographic and editing equipment before she even picked up a brush.

"I look through the camera as if I'm cropping my painting," she said. "It's just the first step in the painting process."

Haywood-Sullivan then copies many of the photos, scales the images up and down, and cuts and pastes them into the desired image.

Bostonian Boyajian's work, though also depicting beautiful landscapes, is a sharp contrast.

Her work, more intellectual than aesthetic in nature, according to Haywood-Sullivan, is reminiscent of Greek mythology.

Unlike her co-exhibitor, whose style is more painterly, emphasizing layers and brush strokes, Boyajian's paintings have a very finished

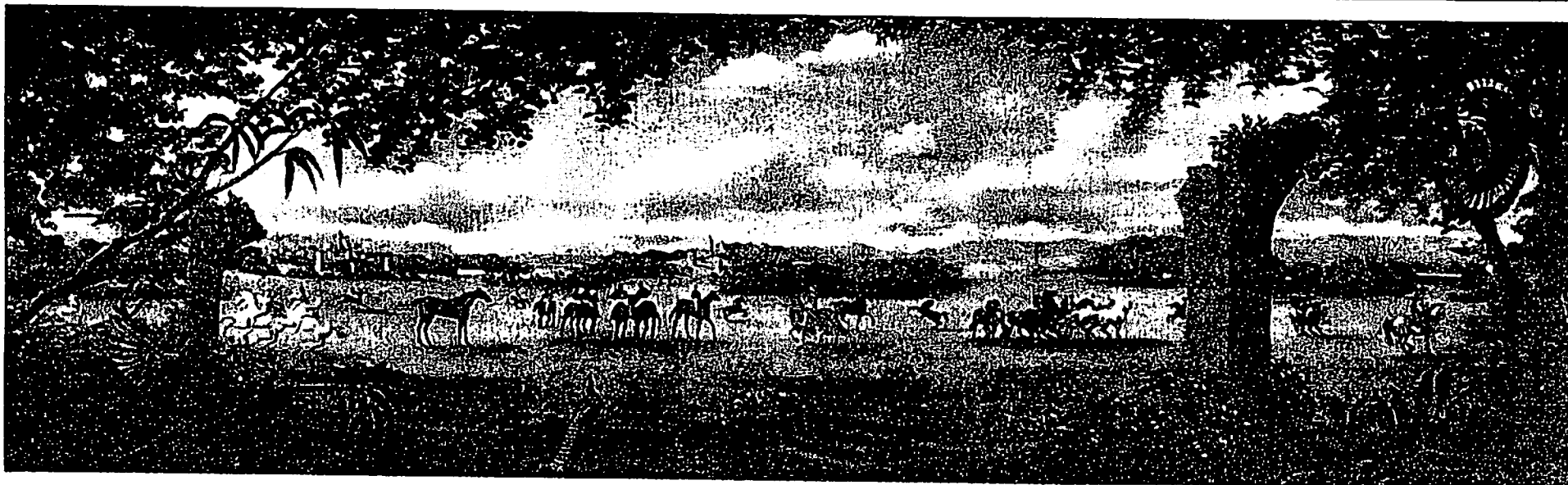
quality.

Her works also have a somewhat sinister quality. Hidden in the rich hues and classical style are "helicopters where birds should be, little guys with guns, snakes winding around trees," Mayes said.

In order to find all of her concealed commentary, viewers should prepare to spend some time; they blend into the work rather than jumping out to meet the eye.

"I think she focuses a lot on the encroachment of civilization on nature and asks the question of 'What is the implication?'" Mayes said.

The Art Complex Museum welcomes visitors to share in the opening celebration of the exhibit this Sunday (July 10) from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Normal gallery hours are between Wednesday and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.



Oil paint — Gail Boyajian's "Historical Horse Show" will be featured at the Duxbury Art Complex.

Photo courtesy of Judy Ann Gelsino